



Functional Skills Certificate

FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH

Component 1 Reading Level 2

Insert

The three sources that follow are:

- Source A: a news report about a Disney toy factory
- Source B: an article about gender-specific toys
- Source C: a webpage about Victorian toys.

**Please open the insert fully
to see all three sources**

Source A

MailOnline

Dark Truth of Disney's Frozen Fairytale

By George Knowles in China and Tracy You in London

MailOnline visited a factory making toys from the hit movie, *Frozen*, as Disney prepares to open a £3.8 billion theme park 900 miles away in Shanghai. At the Zhenyang factory in Qingxi Town, workers toil 11 hours a day, six days a week, to make toys which are sold through various toy stores and websites, such as Toys R Us and Amazon.



Workers come from China's poorest areas leaving families and children behind to spend 50 weeks a year on the production lines, only returning home for a fortnight at the Chinese New Year holiday. Basic pay is just £5.30 a day – one-tenth of the cost of a peak ticket to Shanghai Disneyland. A 'Do You Want to Build a Snowman?' jewellery box sells for £24.99 – only slightly less than a worker's weekly wage at Zhenyang.

Even by working six days a week and taking every available overtime shift at peak season, workers struggle to earn £300 a month. Employees do 100 hours' overtime a month to make ends meet, nearly three times China's legal maximum of 36 hours. If workers turn up one minute late for their shift, they are fined up to half a day's pay; and bosses hand out New Year 'bonuses' of just 50 pence per employee.



Summers are so hot here but we have 12 workers in each small room and only a couple of electric fans to keep us cool.

A worker at the factory told MailOnline that the men's dormitory blocks had only 24 squatting toilets for 320 workers. Workers complained of filthy, overcrowded toilets and canteen meals so poor they are forced to buy food outside.

Inside the park a single Anna or Elsa doll from *Frozen* will cost £35, a Mickey Mouse bag £36 and a Mickey Mouse steamed bun £3.70 – the price of a week of lunches at the factory canteen in Zhenyang.

A great deal needs to be done to improve living and working conditions but the only way to do this is to let the people who buy these Disney toys know the truth about what goes on.

Disney failed to respond to a request for comment, as did Zhenyang toy factory.

Source B



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Toy Story? *By Vanessa Barford*

Some people believe that gender-specific toys risk turning girls off science and maths and that parents should buy their daughters Lego to get them interested in engineering.

There are still huge gender divides in some professions. 80% of science, research, engineering and technology (STEM) professionals are male. 82% of workers in caring, leisure and other services are female.

Becky Francis, professor of education at Roehampton University, believes the toys children play with impact their career choice. She found boys tended to be given **toys that involved action, construction and machinery**, while girls were steered towards **dolls and 'feminine' interests, such as hairdressing**. "The message seemed to be boys should be making things and problem solving, and girls should be caring and protecting," she says.

Typical **boys' toys** tend to be more educational. "**Boys' toys like Lego and Meccano** contain technical information and instructions, and require fitting things together. **Girls' toys** tend to be around imaginative and creative play, which develop different skills," said Professor Francis.

Research by retail group Argos found that over 60% of adults working in design-led jobs, such as architects and designers, enjoyed playing with **building blocks** as children. 66% working in maths-related roles, such as accountants and bankers, preferred **puzzles**.

Critics believe the way toys are packaged and presented in shops adds to the problem.

Dolls, cookery sets and pink princesses are directed towards girls and **action men figures, construction kits and blue racing cars** towards boys.



Space scientist, Maggie Aderin-Pocock, believes the issue goes beyond toys. "It's important there are role models – we need to see female scientists on TV, on EastEnders," she says. Play and child development psychologist, Dr Amanda Gummer, says the key is to make sure children have access to a "healthy play diet. And there's an element of breaking down bias too – a lot of parents won't let a boy have a **doll**."

Ex-commando and full-time childminder, Neil Sinclair, says he wanted to be a soldier long before he had **an Action Man toy**. He believes children should be given a free choice of toys. "I'd take a storage container full of toys – **construction tools, musical instruments, everything** – and let them decide what to play with."

Everyone has memories of toys they loved playing with as a child. It might be **building blocks or a train set, a doll's house or a tea set**. It doesn't necessarily mean those that played with them grew up to be construction workers or train drivers, housekeepers or tea ladies.

Source C

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